

Vegetarian Food & Environment

Link :

<http://www.bkwsu.org/whatwedo/globalinitiatives/environment.htm/ClimateConference2010/VegetarianFoodEnvironment>

Shorten link: <http://goo.gl/AI2Mt>

Why to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle?

There are many reasons that people decide vegetarianism is the best lifestyle choice for them. Some people do not eat meat because of religious, spiritual or ethical reasons, others adopt vegetarianism for health related concerns and still others choose vegetarianism as a means of supporting the environment.

How a vegetarian lifestyle supports the environment. In this age of overpopulation, a vegetarian lifestyle takes economically from nature and prevents environmental degradation, because :

- **Worthwhile use of food:** a steer that provides 200 kg of meat enables the preparation of about 1500 meals; with the cereal it ate, about 18000 meals could have been made.
- **Worthwhile use of water:** 1 kilo of meat requires at least 15000 – 30000 litres; 1 kilo of wheat requires at least 1000 litres.
- **Worthwhile use of soil: a field of land can produce 6000 kg carrots, or 4000 kg apples, or 1000 kg cherries, or only 50 kg beef.**
- **Preventing deforestation:** about 70% of arable land on earth is used for cattle-raising and growing cereals to feed them; enough land to feed the whole world population many times vegetarian; but even now, every minute, man destroys an area of forest equivalent to 5 football fields.
- **Preventing air and water pollution:** about 50% of water pollution in Europe is due to intensive animal farming; the pollution comes from slurry, manure and chemical fertilizers; every day, 2 million tons of this waste pollute the Earth's water.

By adopting a vegetarian lifestyle, more land, more water, and more food is available and less nature is destroyed or polluted. *Sources: "Livestock's Long Shadow (2006) - FAO, for the environment Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic `diseases (1990) – WHO. "Nothing will benefit human health and increase the chances of survival of life on earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet." Albert Einstein

Vegetarianism - a symbol of solidarity with hungry people

Link -

<http://www.euroveg.eu/lang/en/news/press/20061016.php>

Shorten Link - <http://goo.gl/pYkSA>

Press Release - World Food Day - 16 October 2006

Today 815 million people, equaling 17 percent of the population of developing countries, are hungry. The percentage has not changed much since 1990 (20 percent) and it is feared it will still be at an unacceptably high level (11 percent) in 2015.

This precarious situation of unsafe food supplies already results in dramatic consequences under 'normal' circumstances, but what magnitude is it going to take when harvests are bad?

And they are bad now: Difficult climatic conditions in different parts of the world, especially Australia, Argentina and Brazil, ruin present harvests. Continuing heat and droughts are also threatening upcoming crops so that a considerable fall in global food stocks is to be expected. Low supplies and high prices will bring misery to many.

That fact that the demand of grain worldwide exceeds production limits is a consequence of constantly growing meat consumption. Unfortunately a recognition of this simple truth is nowhere to be found. The only official answer to the grim scenario consists in warnings but what help do alarm bells provide when no escape to safety is indicated at the same time?

Should any organization, international or national, have a master plan for defusing the threat, this would be an excellent moment to table it in order to prevent 'business as usual': Rich people giving grain, corn and soy to their farm animals whilst the hungry cannot afford to feed their children.

The European Vegetarian Union emphasizes that the threat of failing harvests once more demonstrates the urgency for a new approach in tackling global hunger: vegetarianism. This compassionate way of life prevents squandering resources which the production of meat involves: ***6000 kilos of carrots, 4000 kilos of apples or 1000 kilos of cherries can be harvested on the same amount of land which at present produces not more than just 50 kilos of beef.***

In view of this blatant waste, fundamental changes are urgently called for. Meat is an extravagance which, foremost in the light of humanity and solidarity, is not affordable any longer.

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Note: The 2007 EVU Talks under the title "The veggie answer to world hunger" offer a platform to discuss this global problem.

Link :

<http://www.vejetaryenkulubu.org/hizmetdetay.asp?ustmg=283&ustsubg=0&varLang=E>

Shorten Link : <http://goo.gl/rL2ce>

History of Vegetarianism

It may surprise many people to hear that our early ancestors lived on a semivegetarian diet for several million years. Some anthropologists have fostered the stereotype of "man the hunter," but studies of contemporary "hunter-gatherers" suggest that early humans lived primarily on a diet of plant foods, with supplementation from animal flesh. Studies of tribal Australian aborigines and the Kung-San of South Africa-groups that live under conditions similar to those of our ancestors-show that only about one fourth of their caloric intake derives from animal products. Nuts, seeds, fruits, and vegetables are the staple foods of these groups. A view of early humans as gatherers rather than hunters is a more accurate portrayal.

Like most good ideas in the West, vegetarianism was developed by the ancient Greeks. Pythagoras and Porphyry were the best-known practicing vegetarians, but the list of those who advocated a vegetarian diet includes Diogenes, Plato, Epicurus, and Plutarch. The Greeks favored vegetarianism for a variety of reasons. Pythagoras and his followers believed that animals as well as humans have souls, and that after death, an animal may be reincarnated as a human and vice versa. According to this view, animals should not be killed and eaten because all souls have equal worth. Plato, in *The Republic*, described a vegetarian diet as being best suited for his ideal society. Plant foods were preferred, according to Plato, because they promote health and because they require less land to produce than do animal foods. Other Greek thinkers felt that eating animal flesh was naturally repugnant and should be rejected on aesthetic grounds.

The Romans borrowed many ideas from the Greeks, including vegetarianism, and in spite of their penchant for feeding undesirables to the lions, vegetarian ideas survived throughout Roman times. The poet Ovid and the philosopher Seneca are examples of Romans who expounded the cause of vegetarianism.

The fall of Rome and the spread of Christianity across Europe led to a "dark ages" in vegetarian thought. During this time, Christian thinkers such as Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas provided intellectual rationalizations for the killing, eating, and general exploitation of animals by humans. They argued that only people have free will, rationality, and souls, and that animals were placed on earth for the convenience and use of humans-views that are still accepted by the majority of Christians today.

However, the tradition of vegetarianism was kept alive in dark and dingy Christian abbeys where monks abstained from meat to suppress their animal passions. (The belief that meat consumption is associated with base urges that hinder one's spiritual progress lingers on in the minds of some contemporary vegetarians, as we will see later.) The Benedictines, Trappists, and Cistercians are all examples of monastic orders that practiced vegetarianism for a period of time.

During the 15th century, Europe discovered classical philosophy, art, and science. But it took the Europeans a little longer to rediscover vegetarianism. Leonardo da Vinci, visionary that he was, stood ahead of his time in being a confirmed vegetarian. As he wrote in his notebook:

I have from an early age adjured the use of meat, and the time will come when men such as I will look upon the murder of animals as they now look upon the murder of men.

The vegetarian "Renaissance" can be said to have occurred during the late 18th and 19th centuries. During this period, Darwin's theory of evolution destroyed the notion that animals are fundamentally different from humans, and in so doing, challenged the religious and philosophical justification for eating them. The new view was that of a continuum of life, with humans and other animals separated in degree, but not in kind.

The implications of the theory of evolution so upset Darwin that he stopped believing in God. He did not, however, give up eating meat.

The new view of animals as distantly related kin was incorporated into the general humanitarian reform movements that occurred at this time. Indeed, many prominent vegetarians and animal welfare promoters were simultaneously involved in other struggles, such as the child welfare and antislavery movements. It was during this period that the first written works on vegetarianism by Europeans appeared. Leo Tolstoy and Percy Bysshe Shelley are examples of 19th-century writers who advocated a meatless lifestyle. For a while, people who abstained from eating flesh were said to be following the "Pythagorean diet." Later, the term "vegetarian" was coined from the Latin word "vegetus," meaning active or vigorous. (The term has misled many into thinking that vegetarians survive only on vegetables-an inaccurate view of vegetarian cuisine.)

Many Christian groups were at the forefront of the burgeoning vegetarian movement. The Bible Christian Church, founded by William Cowherd in 1809 in Manchester, England, played a major role in advocating and furthering the cause of vegetarianism. Members believed that Christ's teachings of mercy should be extended to animals as well as to people. They also believed that a vegetarian diet was healthier than one based on meat and that Christians have a duty to maintain good health in order to do God's work. Members of this group later formed the Vegetarian Society in 1847-the first secular vegetarian organization in the West. They disseminated information in the form of essays and lectures and taught that the adoption of vegetarianism would lead to universal brotherhood, an increase in happiness, and a more civilized society. This group still exists and is presently known as the Vegetarian Society of the United Kingdom.

The movement was carried on into the 20th century by vegetarian societies working at the grass-roots level, religious groups such as the Seventh-Day Adventists, and prominent figures such as George Bernard Shaw and Mohandas Gandhi. Vegetarian organizations formed in most Western countries, and newsletters, books, and other publications promoting the diet became common. In 1908 the International Vegetarian Union was formed, with its main function being to organize conferences at which vegetarians from around the world meet and share information. The union continues to be active today.

This orderly but gradual progression might have continued indefinitely had it not been for the social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s. At this point in time, a variety of influences converged that had major implications for the course of vegetarianism: a new awareness of the importance of diet in maintaining health, an interest in Eastern philosophy and religion, a concern over the degradation of the environment through human "progress," a politically active stance in support of the rights of oppressed groups, the emergence of the peace movement, and a utopian belief in a perfectible society. All of these social trends provided pathways for new converts to the vegetarian cause. Out of this melange, the modern era of vegetarianism emerged.

References: The Origins of Modern Vegetarianism" Amato & Partridge & eatveg.com

Save The World...

Vegetarianism and Ecology

Vegetarianism, the meat industry and ecology are closely interrelated.

An intervention, using all available resources, is needed to stop the mass destruction of the only planet we have, and the meat industry and the habit of eating meat are to blame for the irresponsible and unnecessary waste of resources and mass pollution.

One third of world's land surface is being turned into desert because of meat production, and more than half of world's oceans are

nearing the point of ecological collapse because of overfishing.

Meat consumption is linked to huge problems concerning the environment that the world currently faces, like the global warming, desertification, loss of reforests and the problem of acid rains.

More than 90% of British lakes, ponds and swamps has been dried out- only to make space for agricultural land used to feed more animals. The story is more or less the same in all other parts of the world.

In the USA alone, in the last 200 years one third of the primary surface layer has been ruined for rearing animals. In an attempt to cover this shortage, more than 100 million hectares of forest land has been turned to agricultural areas, and deforestation is still going on at a rate of 0,4 hectares per second.

Farm animal population is producing 550 tons of excrement each second, which is more than 20 times more than humans are producing! In Germany and Holland alone there are 3 tons of stored liquid manure per every inhabitant, which is nearing the total number of 200 million tons. In Pel region in Holland, 90% of forests have died out because of acid rains caused by pig excrements.

Cattle farms are the cause of 85% of total nitrogen evaporation in the form of ammonia in the atmosphere, which is thought to be the main cause of deforestation. Ammonia from animal excrement causes acid rains which destroy the waters and the flora, thus causing more damage than all cars and factories in the world combined. Nitrogen and ammonia could be significantly reduced by reducing the number of cattle farms, which would require a change in people`s diets.

Reforests are destroyed to make grazing areas for cattle. In Central and South America every year an area the size of Belgium is destroyed. Since 1950, half of all the world`s reforests have been destroyed. After six or seven years of pasture, the soil cannot even sustain grass anymore, and so it is turned into dust. Reforest floor is thin and lifeless, so it needs the protection of the roof made of trees.

The Sahara desert was once green and lush, and it grew grain for the Romans. Now, it all disappeared and the desert is growing, in some places it can grow more than 320 kilometers in 20 years. Main cause is excessive pasture of sheep, goats, cammels and cows. As the dessert is growing, the herds are migrating, thus devouring all that stands in front of them.

In only 25 years, around 40% of the Amazonian reforest, which is called the lungs of our planet, has been destroyed. This magnificent wilderness is source to almost half of our medicine. The effect of such ruthless behaviour is that many rare animal species migrate, disappear and go extinct, many of which still not even discovered.

Timber and meat industry are the source of great profit, and when the soil becomes lifeless, they simply move, cut new trees and become even richer. Native people living in the forests are forced to leave their land, and are sometimes even killed.

Every cow produces at least 60 litres of methane daily. Even the fertilizers which are being spread over the land are producing global warming because they produce nitric oxide, a gas that is 270 times more efficient in trapping heat than CO₂. Earth`s temperature is slowly rising, and the ice is beginning to melt. In the Antarctic, the temperature over the last 50 years has risen by 2,5 degrees C, and 8,000 square kilometers of ice bergs have disappeared.

There are water shortages in many countries. But there is no conservation when it comes to rearing and slaughter of animals. To make one kilogram of grain 200 litres of water are needed. To make one kilogram of meat, 20,000 litres are needed.

In America, more than half of all water is used in the meat industry. Nitrogen from the excrements has polluted some underground waters in such a way that some mineral waters are no longer drinkable. Underground waters are pumped in great amounts to satisfy animals` needs, which contributes even more to water shortages.

Every eight seconds 1 acre of land is destroyed to grow food for animals. The person who becomes vegan saves one acre of land every year.

As opposed to other industries, the meat industry in almost every country is subsidized by the state to keep it profitable.

Using the same land surface to produce one kilogram of meat, 200 kilograms of potatoes and 160 kilograms of tomatoes can be produced in the same time period. Also, instead of 50 kilograms of beef, 1,000 kilograms of cherries, 6,000 kilograms of carrots, and 4,000 kilograms of apples can be produced.

Let`s imagine ourselves standing in front of a plate containing 1/2 kilogram of beef steak. Now imagine 45 to 50 people with empty plates in front of them. Instead of that one stake, one cup of cooked cereals could be placed on all those empty plates.

20 vegetarians could be fed using the same land surface needed to feed one "carnivore"!

Washington, Oregon and California alone are using 17 billion kilowatt hours of electricity to rear animals, which is enough to give electric

power to all households in the entire country for one month and a half.

For a family of four which consumes meat in one year, the amount of fuel needed to produce that meat equals the amount used in six months of driving a car.

The influence of mass meat industry on global warming equals the influence of car traffic, and when we take into account the deforestation for pasture land and growing food for cattle, turning the forests into deserts, soil erosion, huge waste of water and energy, we can easily see that with every kilogram of meat we consume, in many various ways we destroy and pollute our planet.

Source: prijatelji-zivotinja.hr

Vegetarian Statistics, Studies and Research

Vegetarian statistics and studies – on the health benefits of vegetarian diets

“These findings confirm other evidence of a lower mortality from heart disease among vegetarians.” - ML Burr and PM Sweetnam, 1982 “Vegetarianism, dietary fiber, and mortality” American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Vol 36, 873-877, 1982

“These data support the hypothesis that intake of red meat is related to an elevated risk of colon cancer.” - Giovannucci, Edward, et al, 1994 “Intake of Fat, Meat, and Fiber in Relation to Risk of Colon Cancer in Men” American Association for Cancer Research, Cancer Research 54, 2390-2397, May 1, 1994

“In conclusion, vegetarians had a 24% lower mortality from ischemic heart disease than non-vegetarians, but no associations of a vegetarian diet with other major causes of death were established.” - Key, Timothy J, et al., 1999 “Mortality in vegetarians and nonvegetarians: detailed findings from a collaborative analysis of 5 prospective studies” American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Vol. 70, No. 3, 516S-524S, September 1999. This study analyzed the combined results from 5 previous studies, covering a total of more than 76,000 people.

In a study of 50,000 male health professionals conducted by the Harvard Medical School, men who eat red meat as a main dish at least five times a week have 400% the risk of getting colon cancer, compared to men who eat red meat less than once a month; they also have 200% the risk of getting prostate cancer.

A 20-year study of 832 middle-aged men was conducted, and it found that the men’s risk of stroke was 22% lower for every 3 servings of fruits and vegetables consumed each day.

A study carried out by the University of Connecticut School of Medicine revealed that the bodies of women who suffered from breast cancer had more than double the concentrations of PCBs as compared to the bodies of other women. It warned against the consumption of animal food products such as dairy products, fish and animal fats.

Vegetarian statistics and studies – demographics of vegetarians

A study conducted at Southampton University in the UK found that the majority of vegetarians were female. Vegetarians were also more likely to be of higher occupational social class, as well as have better academic or vocational qualifications.

In 1992, a study was commissioned by the Vegetarian Times and conducted by the Yankelovich research organisation. It said that “of the 12.4 million people who call themselves vegetarian, 68 percent are female while only 32 percent are male”. For both genders, the main reason for being a vegetarian was health, with nearly 50% of all vegetarians stating it as their primary incentive.

A study conducted at Southampton University in the UK revealed some very interesting vegetarian statistics. It found that intelligent children were more likely to become vegetarians later in life. IQ scores of strict vegetarians and those who reported to be vegetarians but who in fact also ate fish or chicken (i.e. flexitarians, semi-vegetarians or pesco-vegetarians / pescetarians) were similar.

The study of 8,179 people, which began in 1970, said that “higher IQ at age 10 years was associated with an increased likelihood of being vegetarian at age 30 [...] IQ remained a statistically significant predictor of being vegetarian as an adult after adjustment for social class (both in childhood and currently), academic or vocational qualifications, and sex”.

As reported in the BBC, Liz O`Neill of the Vegetarian Society said, “We`ve always known that vegetarianism is an intelligent, compassionate choice benefiting animals, people and the environment.

“Now we`ve got the scientific evidence to prove it. Maybe that explains why many meat-reducers are keen to call

themselves vegetarians when even they must know that vegetarians don't eat chicken, turkey or fish."

Vegetarian statistics and studies – possible effects of vegetarian diets

A study conducted at Nottingham University in the UK, which looked at about 6,000 pregnant women in 1998, found that vegetarian women were more likely than meat-eaters to give birth to baby girls. While the average ratio of boys to girls born in Britain was 106 to 100, the ratio was 85 to 100 for vegetarian mothers. According to researcher Pauline Hudson, the results were statistically significant, although they were dismissed by the British Dietetic Association as a "statistical fluke".

The cause of such a difference is unclear, although one possibility is the presence of phytoestrogens among the phytochemicals (plant chemicals) in plants, which behave in the same way as the female hormone estrogen.

Vegetarian statistics and studies – effects of meat consumption on the environment

There are some staggering vegetarian statistics in this area.

38% of the total grain produced worldwide is used to feed chicken, pigs, and cattle which are raised for human food. In the United States, 70% of the grain produced is fed to livestock. (Gussow, 1994)

1 pound of pork takes 14,000 calories to produce in the United States, while it provides between 1,000 and 2,000 calories of energy to its consumer. (Gussow, 1994)

Since 1970, 20 million hectares of tropical forest in Latin America have been converted to cattle pasture. Such deforestation has had a significant adverse effect on the animal and plant diversity on the continent. (Gussow, 1994)

The US is losing about 4 million acres of cropland each because of soil erosion, and the amount that is directly attributed to raising livestock is estimated to be about 85% of this figure. (The Vegetarian Times Complete Cookbook, 1995)

Over 4,000 gallons of water is used to produce one day's worth of food for the average meat-eater. For ovo-lacto-vegetarians, this figure is 1,200 gallons, while the figure is only 300 gallons for vegans. (The Vegetarian Times Complete Cookbook, 1995)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) stated that, on average, the American vegetarian consumes 150% of his protein needs, while meat-eaters consume twice as much as what they need.

Vegetarian statistics and studies – estimated healthcare costs of meat consumption

Dr William Harris, MD, director of the Kaiser Permanente Vegetarian Lifestyle Clinic in Hawaii, stated the following in an oral testimony in Feb 1998 opposing a bill in Hawaii which proposed to float \$10million in bonds to support the meat industry: "The cholesterol and saturated fat in meat is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, and six types of cancer. Animal protein is a risk factor for auto-immune disease, kidney disease, and osteoporosis. By estimate in my book 'The Scientific Basis of Vegetarianism,' about 1/6 of the almost trillion-dollar yearly U.S. medical bill can be traced to the consumption of animal source food."

The peer-reviewed article, "The medical costs attributable to meat consumption," Prev Med 1995;24(6):646-55, placed medical costs due to meat consumption in the US for 1992 between \$28.6 and \$61.4 billion.